

Inside scoop on fad diets

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Fad diets have been around since the beginning of time, from the Drinking Man's Diet in 1960 to the Scarsdale Diet in 1978 to the many low-carb diets we see these days. But do they work?

I'll let you decide:

- An estimated 66.3 percent of adults age 20 and older are overweight or obese (with a Body Mass Index greater than 25).

- An estimated 32 percent of adults age 20 and over are obese (with a Body Mass Index greater than 30).

- Seventeen percent of adolescents age 12 to 19 are overweight.

- Nineteen percent of children ages 6 to 11 are overweight.

- On any given day, almost half the women in the United States are on a diet, and one in four men are on a diet.

- More than one out of three normal dieters progress to pathological dieting.

- Americans spend more than \$40 billion dollars a year on dieting and diet-related products

What's your answer? I hope you agree that no, diets do not work. That leaves a lot of folks in a tricky situation.

What are you supposed to do instead?

- Make weight-management a priority. If you eat healthy, the weight loss will follow.

- Rely on healthful eating, regular physical activity and acceptance of the weight you can achieve as a result.

- Set realistic, attainable goals.

- Instead of dieting, focus on a healthful lifestyle that can be maintained for a lifetime.

- Focus your strategies, and be action-oriented and specific.

■ Tailor your strategies to your schedule, your budget, your family situation and your personal needs.

■ Think long-term; act gradually.

■ Cut yourself some slack. Nobody's perfect.

■ Plan to indulge sensibly.

■ Expect success.

If you find that you need help with any of these steps, consult a registered dietitian at 414-8312.

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